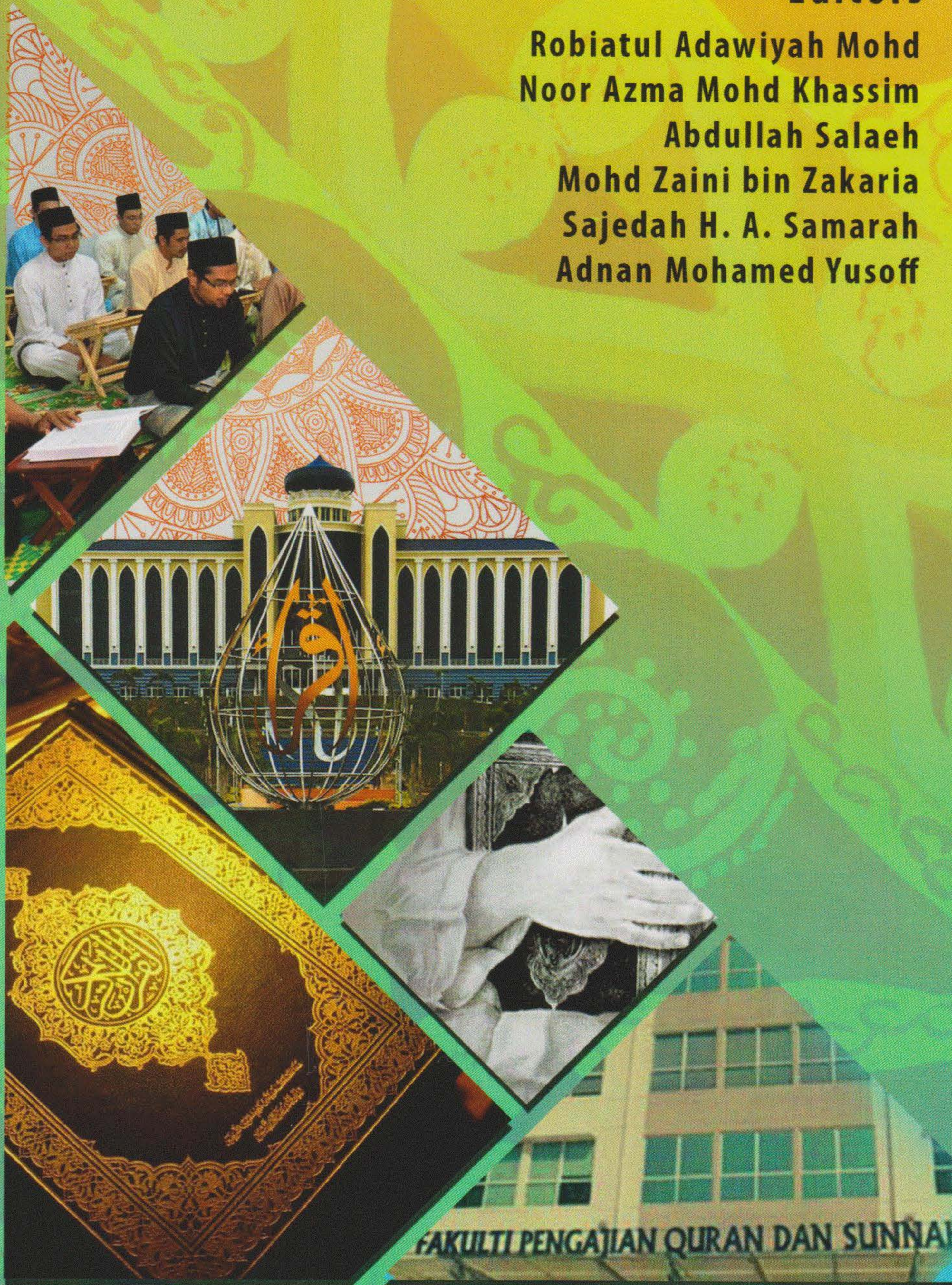


IMPLEMENTING QURANIC VALUES IN SOCIETY

Editors

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CONTENT

KNOWLEDGE AND SCIENTIFIC CULTURE, HISTORY AND ISSUES

1

1. THE CONTEMPORARY INTELLECTUAL CRISIS AND LACK OF CLEAR PERCEPTION OF SCIENCE AND SCIENTIFIC THINKING: THE CHALLENGE OF THE QURAN
Professor Dr Muhammad Mumtaz Ali (IIUM) 2
2. RISALAT/ NABUWAT: CURRENT & ETERNAL RELEVANCE
Dr. S M Yunus Gilani (IIU MALAYSIA) 24
3. THE HISTORY OF ISLAMIC ASTRONOMY AND MUSLIMS CHALLENGES IN INTERPRETING THE QUR'ANIC VERSES
Aizan Binti Ali @ Matzin and Shuaibu Umar Gokaru 32
4. THE FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE ISLAMIC AND SECULAR CONCEPTIONS OF KNOWLEDGE: AN EXPOSITION OF THE THEMES OF THE FIRST REVELATION TO PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PEACE BE UPON HIM)
Kabuye Uthman Sulaiman (IIUM) 49
5. AL-QUR'AN AS A TRUE REPORT AND SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE EARLY MALAY INTELLECTUAL TRADITION
Dr. Aliza bin EliasDr and Che Razi bin Jusoh (IIUM) 66
6. WHY WE ARE NOT SATISFIED: IN THE CONTEXT OF DECLINING FACTORS OF UMMAH
Dr. Maulana Akbar Shah @ U Tun Aung (IIUM) 80
7. THE QURAN STATUS AMID ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION SOURCES
Habibollah Babaei (AISC,IRAN) 91

I'JAZ QURAN, SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY AND TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS

102

8. ALPHABETICAL MIRACLES OF THE HOLY QURAN
M.Ameer Althaf 103
9. SUMMARY REVIEW OF EXISTING RESEARCH OF ONTOLOGIES IN HOLY QUR'AN
Ali Abu Zaid, Mustafa Khlaif Abu Zaid, Dr. Norhidayah Azman (USIM) 122

THE FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE ISLAMIC AND SECULAR
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FIRST REVELATION TO PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PEACE BE UPON HIM)
By

KABUYE UTHMAN SULAIMAN

ABSTRACT

This paper describes the concept of knowledge with reference to the themes of the first revelation to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). It is divided into seven sections elucidating the Lordship (sovereignty) of Allah, the foremost requirement in the pursuit of knowledge, the origin of knowledge, the value of knowledge, the ultimate objective of knowledge, the value of the pen and the key to the acquisition of knowledge. The primary purpose of this study is twofold; to highlight the fundamental differences between the Islamic and secular conceptions of knowledge; and to show the cohesion of knowledge and deeds, role of knowledge in the formation of civilization, inseparability of knowledge and God, and the necessary connection between senses and intellect. The main argument of the paper is that reading in the name of Allah is the key to acquisition of knowledge and the distinguishing characteristic of knowledge acquisition in Islam. Also knowing one's origin and one's place in the universe is one of the goals of knowledge acquisition in Islam. The paper contends that the first revelation to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) played a significant role in the intellectual development in Arabia and beyond. It takes iqra' (the command to read/seek knowledge) as the central force in the emergence of Islamic civilization and a key factor in the subsequent emergence of the Western civilization. The study concludes with summation of the discussion and recommendations.

Keywords: Islam, secularism, knowledge, civilization.

INTRODUCTION

Revelation to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) began with the following five verses of the Qur'an that denote the Lordship of Allah and the importance, value and ultimate objective of knowledge among others:

"Proclaim! (or read!) in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, Who created. Created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood. Proclaim (read)! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful. He Who taught (the use of) the pen. Taught man that which he knew not." (Iqra' 1-5)

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